

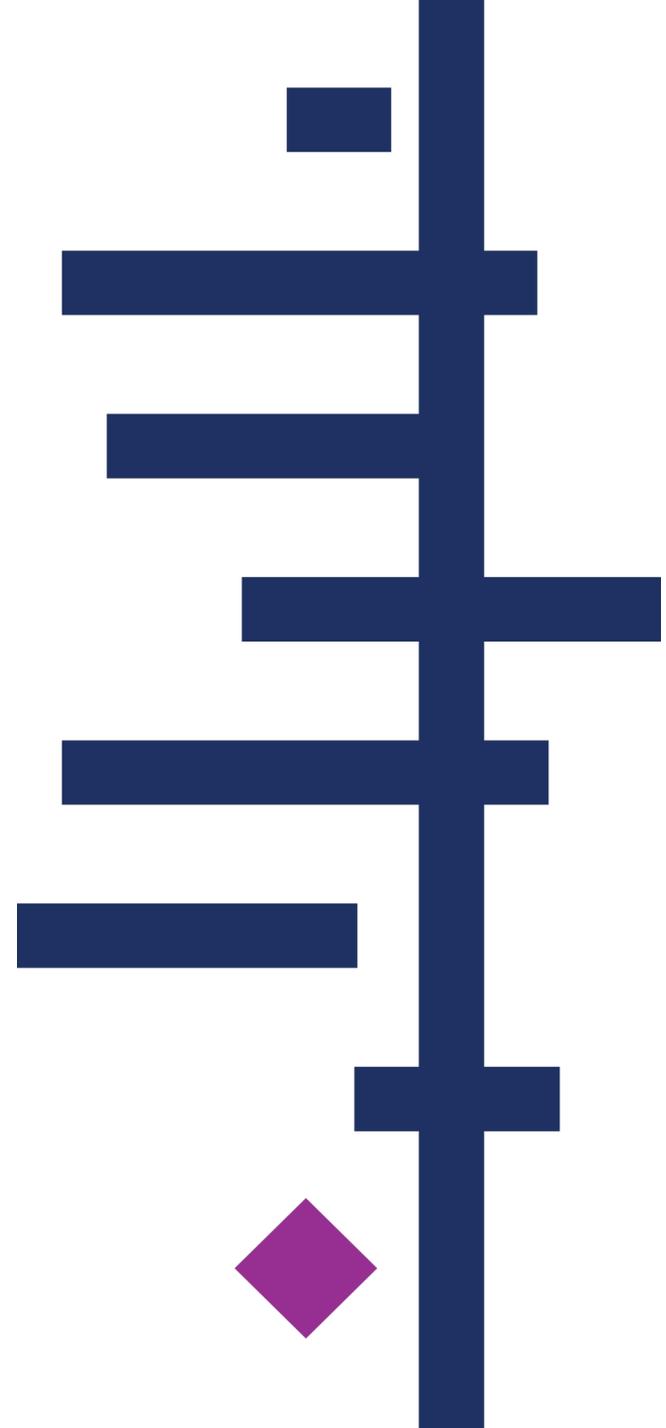


Peer review for Cochrane Reviews

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Monaz Mehta, Sera Tort

Cochrane Editorial Unit

Trusted evidence.
Informed decisions.
Better health.



Disclosures of conflicts of interest

John Hilton, Bryony Urquhart, Harriet MacLehose, Sally Bell-Syer, Monaz Mehta, Sera Tort

Employed by Cochrane



Overview

- Background: Why? How? When?
- Policy development process
- What the policy covers
- Some key areas of policy
- Review Group survey
- What's next
- What's happening in peer review?



Background

- Cochrane Editorial Unit supports Cochrane Review Groups, and works to improve quality and the Cochrane Library



The image shows two side-by-side screenshots of the Cochrane website. The left screenshot is for the 'Cochrane Community' page, featuring a purple navigation bar with links for 'Review production', 'Organizational info', 'Tools', and 'News and events'. Below the navigation bar is a section titled 'Editorial and Publishing Policy Resource' with a search box and a list of links including 'Enhanced Cochrane Library project', 'Cochrane Review Ecosystem', and 'Production resources'. The right screenshot is for the 'Cochrane Library' page, featuring a purple navigation bar with links for 'Cochrane Reviews', 'Trials', and 'More Resources'. Below the navigation bar is a large image of a hand holding a medical device, and a search box with the text 'Search title, abstract, keyword'.

- CRGS have policies, but no Cochrane-wide policy on peer review
- Policy to be supplemented with supporting guidance
- Peer review is a hot topic: is it doomed or thriving?

Why do we need a policy?

FOR EDITORIAL TEAMS

To provide clear expectations, standards and guidance for managing the peer review process.

FOR AUTHORS

To provide clarity around the peer review process for authors embarking on a Cochrane Review.

FOR PEER-REVIEWERS

To provide a framework for peer-reviewers working across CRGs.

FOR USERS

To provide clarity about Cochrane's peer review process, both in general and for specific reviews.

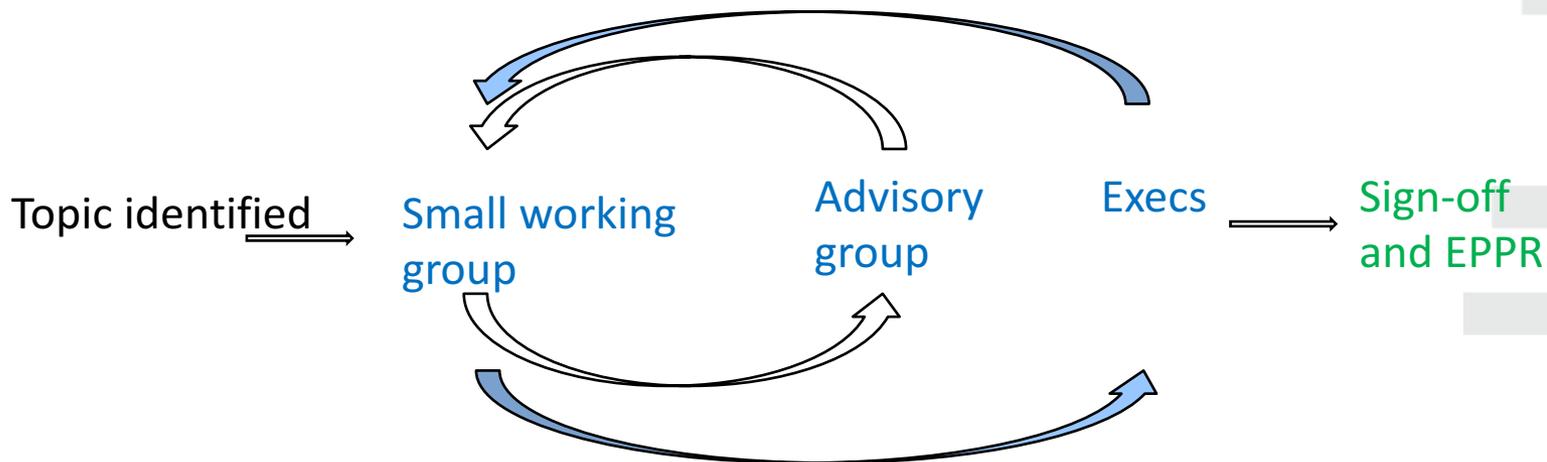
What's different about Cochrane?

- 'Peer referee' versus 'peer review'
- Consumers
- Multiple Review Groups
- Peer review not usually accept/reject
- Cochrane Reviews are long and complex
- Evidence-based

But in general the same principles and same challenges as faced by authors, editors and peer reviewers everywhere.



Editorial policy development



Peer review policy development

Workshop
Draft policy development
Advisory Group formation
Policy revision
Survey
Draft policy completed
Consultation
Revision, Sign-off, Publication
Communication
Implementation
Audit



Oct 2015

Nov 2016



What's included

- Type of peer review
- Number and expertise of peer reviewers
- Declarations of interest for peer reviewers
- Acknowledgement and credit for peer reviewers
- Peer review turnaround time
- Ensuring that authors address reviewers' comments
- Feedback to peer reviewers
- Inviting peer reviewers to be authors
- Editorial roles



What's included (continued)

- Peer review checklists
- Peer reviewer conduct and ethics
- Conflict resolution
- Review Group peer review policies and procedures
- Research into peer review

- PLUS supporting guidance



What's not included

- Post-publication peer review
- Open (published) peer review



Open (named) peer review

Should peer reviewers identities be known to authors and other peer reviewers?

PROS

Transparency

Open science

Less one-sided

Better reviews?

Interests exposed

CONS

Some reluctance

Less honest

Biases (+ and -)

Bland reviews?

Reluctance

Evidence?

Limited and seems to vary between journals and settings.



Reviewers: how many reviewers and what expertise?

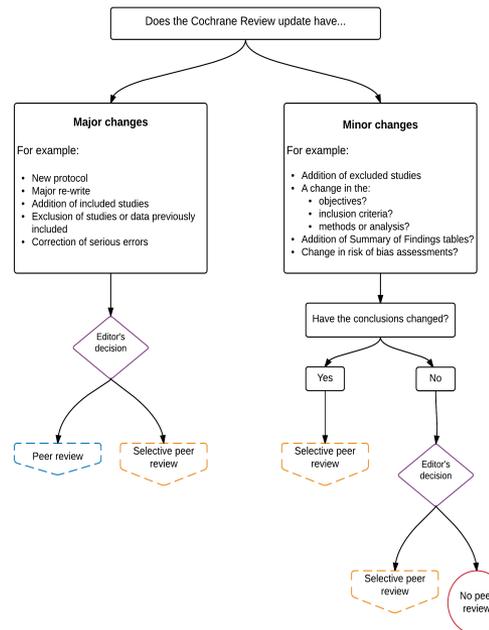
- At least one clinical/topic specialist, with a minimum of one external to the CRG.
- PLUS one statistician/methodologist (if the review deviates from standard methods or uses complex methods).
- Aim to include (if relevant) at least one consumer (or user) peer reviewer



Peer review of updates

- Full or selective peer review?
- Always need peer review?
- What's changed?

>> Decision flowchart



Published peer review policies



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Welcome

About us

Scope of work

Resources

Editorial process

- ◆ Specialised register
- ◆ Searches for studies
- ◆ Information for authors, peer reviewers, co-reviewers, handsets
- ◆ Forms, documents resources
- ◆ Editorial process
- ◆ Useful links
- ◆ Courses and presentations

Titles



About us

Our evidence

For peer reviewers

- ◆ For authors
- ◆ For editors
- ◆ For peer reviewers

We operate a closed peer review process.

Peer reviewers are acknowledged without a reference to the participant



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About us

Gynaecology

Neuro-oncology

Our Reviews

Resources

What is refereeing?

- ◆ Resources for review authors
- ◆ Training
- ◆ Editor Information
- ◆ Summary of Findings Table (GRADE)
- ◆ MECIR
- ◆ Reporting Guidelines

Cochrane Peer Referees

Refereeing is a critical part of the process to ensure the quality of Cochrane reviews (the first, developmental stage of a Cochrane review.) The idea of refereeing is that a review is given to some experts to critique it and suggest ways it could be improved. These comments are taken into account in developing the final draft that will actually be published. The reviewers receive a complete copy of the referees comments.

Survey of Review Groups

- Inform implementation of new policy
- Help to identify where additional guidance would help
- Share best practice
- Inform future policy development

50 Review Groups responded.

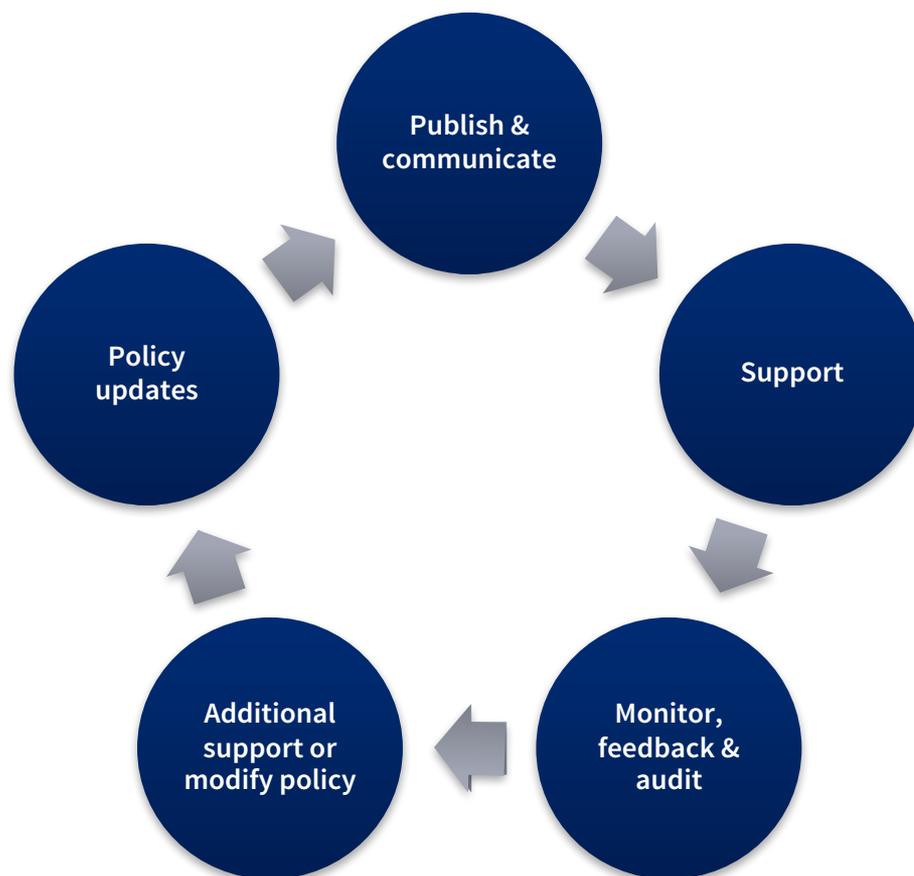


Survey: summary of findings

- All CRGs carry out peer review; about half have a documented policy
- Open (named) peer review is commonly used
- Most CRGs use the standard Cochrane peer review forms, or a modified version
- Most CRGs publish the names of their peer reviewers
- Feedback is often provided to peer reviewers; opportunity for further incentives
- The most challenging aspects of peer review relate to time: getting reviewers to respond to the invitation, the time it takes peer reviewers to return comments, finding specialist peer reviewers, and overall the time it takes to organise peer review.



Implementation



What's next?

Draft policy finalisation

Policy consultation, via Review Group Executives

Policy revision and sign-off

Cochrane Editorial and Publishing and Policy Resource updated and communicated

Webinars, presentations, guidance

Plan for monitoring, audit and feedback



Supporting guidance

How to find peer reviewers

How to keep peer reviewers

How to improve quality of peer reviews

How to speed up peer review

How to involve consumers and users

How to handle ethical issues

Introducing new peer review processes

Managing feedback





PEER REVIEW WEEK 2016

19TH TO 25TH SEPTEMBER 2016

Theme: Recognition for review



ORCID

Connecting Research
and Researchers

WILEY

Wiley Exchanges

About

Develop

Educate

Discover



Cochrane Training

Trusted evidence.
Informed decisions.
Better health.

Learning resources

Pathways

Workshops and c

Research

Opportunities for research! Within groups; between groups; comparing with non-Cochrane



Explore journals

Research Integrity and Peer Review



Increasing the evidence base in journalology: creating an international best practice journal research network

[David Moher](#) ✉ and [Philippe Ravaud](#)

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Thank you

Peer Review Advisory Group:

**Deirdre Beecher, Ruth Brassington
Chris Eccleston, Karen Robinson
Susan Wieland, Caroline Struthers
Melina Willson, Richard Wormald**

CRG staff who responded to the survey





<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/972533097/monument-to-an-anonymous-peer-reviewer/description>

